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U. S. B. Mint, New Orleans,  
April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1839.

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1<sup>st</sup>. inst., in which you propose the following enquiries:

"1<sup>st</sup>. When did you commence coming?" To which I answer, - On the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 1838.

"2<sup>d</sup>. Were you supplied from Philadelphia with the necessary machinery, apparatus & materials required for your operations, or do you think that you have had reasonable grounds for complaint in this respect, and that this has been a prominent cause of the scanty coinage of last year?"

In the Assayer's, Melter & Refiner's, and Coiner's departments I believe that the necessary machinery, apparatus & materials, requisite to commence operations, were supplied. The reports of the Assayer and Melter & Refiner to me to that effect were quite satisfactory. The reports of the Coiner however would seem to indicate that the causes of delay and of the scanty coinage of the last year are to be found in his department. In his first report to me, dated Jan. 1, 1838, he says: "Considerable delay has been occasioned, and some future inconvenience may be appre-



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hended from the injudicious departure, of the person  
employed to place the said engine & machinery,  
from the plan given him. For instead of placing  
the engine in the middle of the room, as was in-  
tended, he has placed it four & a half feet towards  
the annealing furnaces, which, besides destroying  
the symmetry of the room and violating the rules  
of good taste, throws the annealing furnaces away  
from their foundation previously laid and settled,  
rendering almost useless the room beyond, designed  
for whitening cleaning, &c., and likewise, in the  
opposite side of the building, brings the line shaft,  
intended for driving the coining presses, an equal  
distance out of its proper place. To these remarks  
I feel bound to add, that the entire machinery  
in the principal story of the building is found to be  
too low for the floor by two inches." Again: "The  
coining-presses, of which there are three of different  
sizes, will all require material alterations to ren-  
der them efficient & durable. But the largest  
may be gotten ready for temporary use in three  
or four weeks, and in the mean time the other two  
may be undergoing a more thorough preparation.  
Of the other machines and the minor apparatus, I  
need only say that the former are all of them more  
or less unfinished, and that the latter require time  
to arrange & put them in operation." In his  
second report, dated Feb. 27, 1838, he says: "I have  
used all possible diligence in forwarding my pre-



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parations, in order to be ready to commence operations in the course of the ensuing month. Two of the coining presses are nearly ready for the reception of the dies. In his report of the 31st. of July, he assigns as a reason for having coined only one description of coins, "the very limited number of men employed in his department," which, he states, "has rendered it impracticable in our present stage of advancement to keep up or supply of planchets of even a single kind for the full operation of a single coining-press, and at the same time to do justice to the branches which are in the rear." Again: "A great cause of delay has been found in the imperfection of the rolls. It would be a <sup>task</sup> ban to undertake to enumerate all the various hindrances and disappointments which have tended to retard our progress, such as the want for a long time of weighing balances, and to the present time, of any thing like suitable weights."

From these extracts, I cannot but think, if the Comr be right, that the defective & unfinished state of all the machinery in the coining department has been a prominent cause of the scanty coinage of last year, and that in this respect there has been reasonable ground of complaint. The assurances of Mr. Gordon, and the statement contained in the Annual report, relative to the Mint and its Branches, to the President, in Jan., 1838, made me feel authorized to reply to the numerous enquiries of the citizens as to the time when the operations



of the Mint would commence, that I could not entertain a doubt of our being in full operation early in the Spring of 1838, and that a very efficient coinage would be the result of our operations during the year. Soon after the first deposit was made by M. de Lizardo & Co., Mr. E. J. Forstall of that firm stated to me that he wished to deposit \$300,000. worth of bullion provided he could have the positive assurance of its being coined by the 1st of July. I asked Mr. Tyler if it could be done, and he expressed himself confidently that it could with certainty. Mr. Forstall however finding that no coinage was going on, did not make the deposit. How far Mr. Tyler was deceived is evident from the fact that up to the 1st of August, only \$40,000 were coined.

Aware of the disappointment of the public and of the injury that would result to this Branch Mint, I repeatedly urged Mr. Tyler to push on his operations as rapidly as possible. He always encouraged me with the hope that in a few days every thing would be in full operation; but I was invariably disappointed by the intelligence of new defects in the machinery rendering much repairs indispensable, and further delay unavoidable.

"3d. When were the operations of the Mint suspended to allow the unacclimated officers and

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men to leave New Orleans, - and when were the operations resumed by their return?"

The operations of this Br. Mint were suspended on the 1st of August. Business was resumed in the Assaying and Melting & Refining departments in November, - Coining, about the 1st of January, 1839.

"4th. Did you not consider this suspension, for the first hot season, an act of prudence and propriety?"

I did; but I am now convinced, from the information of experienced physicians, that it is only by remaining here during the summer, that northern men can be acclimated, & that no advantage whatever could be gained in that respect, by their leaving the City during the hot season. I am moreover persuaded that the welfare of this institution requires that it should be kept in full operation, the whole year, unless the yellow fever should prevail, [as], as much bullion arrives during the summer months from Mexico, as <sup>in</sup> any other part of the year, and if northern officers & workmen cannot be found who will incur that risk, I am satisfied that both officers & workmen, acclimated and fully ~~compe-~~ ~~and~~ qualified for their respective duties may be found in this city.

"5th. How are the operations of the Mint now going forward? Have you more than one press at work? Have you yet coined any thing but dimes



and half-dimes? If so, what other coins? What are your immediate prospects as to coinage?"

The operations of the Mint go on much better at present than they did last year; though a great change must yet take place before the expectations of the Government and the public will be realized. We have never had more than one press at work at a time, nor have we now. Besides dimes & half-dimes, we have coined half-dollars. As to our immediate prospects of coinage I can see no reason to induce me to hope that, without some decided change, we shall do much better than we have already done. As to the supply of bullion, I feel no anxiety. The Mint I believe will always be supplied with bullion when Depositors can be accommodated with coins.

"6th. How much has been deposited at your Mint for coinage? of this how much has been paid?"

The amount deposited for coinage up to the present time is \$ 332,595.32; of which there has been of Silver, \$ 261,659.15, and of Gold, \$ 70,936.17. of this there has been paid \$ 226,757.97 - being, of Silver \$ 204,494.23, and on account of Gold \$ 22,263.74 - out of the fund provided by the Secretary of the Treasury \$ 135,000.00, - in coins of the Mint \$ 91,757.97.



"7th. State the whole amount of your coinage up to the date of your report."

It amounts to \$116,403.40 - in dimes, half-dimes and half-dollars.

"8th. If you can learn how much foreign silver & gold has been imported into New Orleans since the opening of your Mint, I should be very glad to have this information, and if possible I should like to know how much was in uncoined bullion."

On application to the Collector, I have ascertained that there was reported from the 7th of May, 1838, to the 24th of March, 1839, of foreign bullion - \$1,493,337. - of which about \$70,000. - was gold; and \$444,910. - in uncoined silver bullion. The Collector informed me that there was much more brought in and not reported. Formerly, nearly all the bullion imported from Mexico was in bars. Since a heavy duty has been laid on bullion exported, the proportions have been reversed, so that at this time about \$300,000 is the supposed estimate of the amount imported from Mexico in bars. From the information I have received, I am induced to believe from the great benefit which has resulted from the few experimental deposits of uncoined bullion that have been made in this mint, and the assurances of gentlemen on -



gaged in the Mexican trade in this City, and  
 of others who reside in Mexico, that the  
 amount of uncoined bullion hereafter  
 will be immensely increased. In former  
 years as much as eight millions of  
 bullion & specie have been received in  
 this City in one year, from Mexico.

There is no reason to doubt that com-  
 mercial prosperity will, now that  
 peace has been concluded between  
 France and Mexico, be speedily restored.

Very respectfully,

Your faithful servant,

(Signed) David Bradford,  
 Ins't.

To,

Dr. R. M. Patterson, }  
 Director of the Mint.